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Reduction of fuel and cooking oil imports needed to decrease trade deficiencies: Senior General



State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing discusses the health and economic development sectors at the Management Committee Meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 25 February 2021.

THE State Administration Council held the meeting of the Management Committee at its headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Chairman of the Council and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivered a speech at the meeting, which was attended by Vice-Chairman of the Council and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, the Union Ministers and the Attorney-General of the Union.

In his discussion, the Senior General talked about the progress in the rule of law in nearly one-month since the Council took the power of the country, containment measures against COVID-19 with 1.4 million infection and about 3,200 deaths in Myanmar and the possibility of higher figures due to the crowds

in previous weeks, the negative impacts on healthcare services due to civil disobedience movement of health workers, possible legal actions of relevant ministries against those who disturb the reopening of hospitals, vaccination programme for COVID-19, import permits for the private pharmaceutical companies, and reopening of schools.

He also discussed the promotion of the agricultural sector for food sufficiency of the country, livestock and fish breeding farms, commercial production of foodstuffs, the use of irrigation water for the agricultural sector, generation of electricity from hydro and solar powers, promotion of Myanmar martial arts for the health of people, raising fund for the public hospitals to provide free healthcare services for the civil service personnel at the initial stage.

The Senior General contin-

...reduce fuel requirement in the country, with manufacturing electric cars by the relevant ministries for the urban public transport, the need for urgent completion of Yangon-Mandalay railway project jointly implemented by Japan and reduction of fuel and cooking oil imports to decrease trade deficiencies.

ued to reduce fuel requirement in the country, with manufacturing electric cars by the relevant ministries for the urban public transport, the need for urgent completion of Yangon-Mandalay railway project jointly implemented by Japan and reduction of fuel and cooking oil imports to decrease trade deficiencies.

The Union Ministers and the Attorney-General of the Union

reported signing agreements, the appointment of duties, exemptions and extension of duties.

The Union Ministers also discussed fish breeding projects, systematic spending of state revenue, social welfare funds, healthcare services at the hospitals, school reopening programme, implementation of hydropower projects and organizing celebrations of ethnic

festivals.

In response to the reports, the Senior General gave guidance on the appointment of civil service personnel, fair management on them without bias, the award for dutiful persons, punishment for the failure of duties, lesser consumption of cooking oil with changing consumption habits for better health.

He advised conducting research and development programme, not to mention the unfruitful information on social media, suspension to pay back the two-month salary loans for the civil service personnel, development of Nay Pyi Taw area, reopening of factories and workplaces without posing negative impacts on the environment, attraction to foreign investments and the establishment of 81-ft high marble Buddha image in sitting posture in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Order No 92/2021
14th Waxing of Tabodwe 1382 ME
Return to Military Duties

Major-General Phone Myat, the Deputy Minister for Border Affairs, will be assigned for original military duties.

By order,
Sd/Aung Lin Dway
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Health and Sports
Order No 22/2021
14th waxing of Tabodwe 1382 ME
25 February 2021

THE Ministry of Health and Sports has issued this order in line with provisions stipulated in Section 21-(b) of the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Law.

1. Regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) preventive measures, the Ministry of Health and Sports announced that more than 5 people were not allowed to gather except for exceptional cases by Order No 37/2020 dated 16.4.2020 and by Order No 56/2020 dated 28.5.2020. The Ministry of Health and Sports amended the announcement that 15 people or more instead of 5 people were not allowed to gather starting from 1.8.2020 by Order No 79/2020 dated 29.7.2020 and, by Order No 88/2020 dated 12.8.2020, it was amended the announcement that 30 people or more were not allowed to gather.

2. Due to the current outbreak of COVID-19, it has been amended not to gather more than 50 people instead of 30 except for the matters mentioned in these orders from 26.2.2021.

3. If there is a failure to comply with the instructions and orders issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Department of Public Health regarding COVID-19 will result in legal action.

Dr Thet Khine Win
Union Minister

Notification to take legal actions
against formation of committees
representing Hluttaws
(25 February 2021)

1. The State of Emergency was announced on 1-2-2021 as per Section 417 of the State Constitution (2008), and legislative, administrative and judicial power was granted to the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. Since then, it is deemed that legislative works of all Hluttaws and their respective committees have been suspended, and the respective Hluttaws have been revoked automatically on the day when their terms have ended.

2. At present, the Union Election Commission is investigating the voting fraud in the General Election on 8 November 2020, and the findings were also announced. It has been notified that the Hluttaw representative credentials issued by the UEC to the respective Hluttaws have been invalid during the investigation period.

3. It is illegal to perform the Hluttaw works such as forming committees representing Hluttaw without authority, holding committee members, making announcements and notifications and appointment of representatives during the investigation period of UEC.

4. Therefore, forming the representative committees of Hluttaws after 1 February 2021 is not in compliance with the State Constitution and Hluttaw laws. Such announcements and notifications could endanger the rule of law, peace and stability of the public. It is notified to avoid such actions, and effective legal actions will be taken in accordance with the existing laws.

Union Election Commission

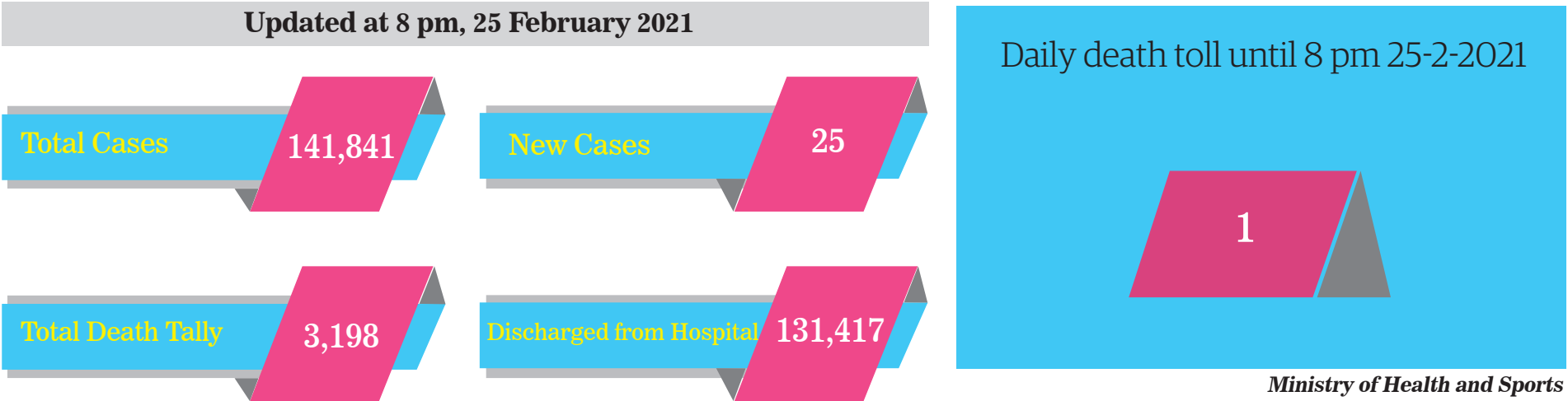
Public Announcement
(21 February 2021)

THE 22 February is the day for more than 900,000 pensioners to withdraw their pensions, and they also rely only on their pensions. It is found out that the news is spreading on Facebook to conduct various ways to destruct or block the ways to banks by force to fail in pension withdrawals. Moreover, some people threatened others to participate in the CDM movement, and so the people who want to stay peacefully sent letters to the State Administration Council many times to solve these cases. According to the culture of democracy, people can stage a protest in accordance with the law. But now, the lawless actions like threats or use of force that affect the stability of the people lead to occur riot. Therefore, it is announced that action will be taken against these moves according to the law.

State Administration Council Information Team

25 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 25 February, total figure rises to 141,841

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 141,841 after 25 new cases were reported on 25 February 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, 3,198 died, 131,417 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA



Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs
- (A) Building of a Union based on democracy and federalism in practising genuine disciplined multiparty democracy in a full fairness manner

(B) Emphasizing of restoration of eternal peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)

(C) Continuous practising of the “principle” of peaceful co-existence among countries by holding up the independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy
2. Economic affairs
- (A) Further development of production based on agriculture and livestock breeding through modern techniques and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well

(B) Stability of market economy and inviting international investments to develop the economy of entire ethnic people

(C) Encouragement of local businesses to create employment opportunities to be able to produce many products of the State
3. Social affairs
- (A) For ensuring of dynamism of Union spirit which is genuine patriotic spirit

(B) Following customs and traditions of all ethnic nationalities and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national characters

(C) Enhancement of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Five future programmes of State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted to carry out tasks that should be done, including inspection of voting lists in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken for the prevention of current infectious COVID-19 with added momentum.
3. Efforts will be made to recover businesses that faced loss caused by COVID-19 in various ways as quickly as possible.
4. Emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible.
5. When missions will be accomplished in accord with provisions of the state of emergency, a free and fair multiparty democracy election will be held in accordance with the Constitution (2008), and further tasks will be undertaken to hand over State duty to the winning party meeting the standards of democracy.

Naval vessels bring
Myanmar citizens
back from Malaysia

MYANMAR naval vessels reached its maritime zone yesterday morning, bringing back a total of 1,086 Myanmar nationals from Malaysia.

The police officials and Tatmadaw personnel from the Taninthayi Naval Regional Command Headquarter offered Mohinga, while Tatmadaw doctors and nurses were providing healthcare services to the returnees.

When they arrive in Myanmar, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will cooperate for job opportunities and reunion with their families.—MNA

Myanmar returnees are seen onboard the Navy vessel when it enters Myanmar maritime waters.



137 courses for diploma, postgraduate in medical education to be conducted

A total of 2,082 trainees will be allowed for 137 courses of diploma and postgraduate at medical universities and related universities under the Ministry of Health and Sports in 2021 academic year.

The applications for these courses shall be submitted commencing 2nd week of February.

Sr	University	Diploma	M.Sc	Doctorate	Total
1	Universities of Medicine	7	31	47	85
2	Universities of Dental Medicine	2	10	9	21
3	Universities of Nursing	1	9	1	11
4	Universities of Medical Technology	1	3	3	7
5	Universities of Pharmacy	-	4	4	8
6	University of Public Health	1	2	1	4
7	University of Community Health	-	1	-	1
Total		12	60	65	137

Interest of individuals through peace and stability of the country

He continued to say about legal actions against voter list errors, the systematic holding of elections after the State of Emergency, priority on the livelihood, peace, stability, the rule of law and peace processes and interest of individuals through peace and stability of the country.

*(Excerpt from the speech to the coordination meeting of the State Administration Council
made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 16 February 2021)*

Public information

YANGON Administration Council is working with relevant departments to help the businesses in the region. People are informed to contact the following phone numbers to get assistance for their small and medium-scaled businesses and investments which are facing some delays and working to do new businesses.

Phone numbers: 01 830 1975, 01830 2175

Yangon Region Administration Council

Tatmadaw supporters hold rally in cities

PEOPLE in some areas of the country staged rallies yesterday to show their support for the ruling of Tatmadaw in line with the 2008 State Constitution. About 0.1 million organized the demonstrations in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, in front of Yangon Railway Station, Kungyan road to Alanpyaphaya Road, circular round-about near Sule Pagoda; about 5,000

in Taunggyi Township (Shan east); 1,000 in Myanaung and Ngapudaw townships of Ayeyawady region; 1,500 in Taungup township in Rakhine State; 1,300 at Thuwunnawadi and Thanphuzayat townships in Mon State; 1,400 in Kyunsu township of Taninthayi Region. They shouted their slogans in supporting the Tatmadaw that safeguards the nationals and

Sasana while holding posters depicting, 'We Stand With Our Defence Services' 'We Want Democracy', 'We Stand With State Administration Council', etc. The Tatmadaw supporters have staged 188 demonstrations, including mass talks, street rally and going around in vehicles after the General Election on 8 November 2020.—MNA

Dutiful civil servants receive threats, incitements for CDM

A video file went viral on social media of CDM activists threatening civil service personnel of Township Administration office of No (4) Ward of Lanmadaw Township in Yangon to join the civil disobedience movement. Similarly, another video clip of a doctor of Kan Htoo Ma station hospital in Tant-Se Township, Shwebo District of Sagaing Region, explained the threats from some unscrupulous

persons to joining CDM spread on the social network. Therefore, such moves like threats and social punishments against the dutiful civil servants should not be carried out as it can harm the country's governance mechanism. If the people commit such doings, they will be taken action, and those who face such threats can contact the announced phone numbers. —MNA

MoSWRR share information from speech of State Administration Council Chairman

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement held a Zoom meeting yesterday over re-explanation of the directives of the State Administration Council Chairman made on 8 February. The meeting was attended by Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine, relevant Region/State/District-level staff officers. The Union Minister firstly discussed the meeting of the State Administration Council with the Permanent Secretaries of ministries held on 21 February regarding the permission for those on annual leave until 24 February and they were also informed with letters to come to the work on 25 February ex-



Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine holds Zoom meeting to re-explain the directives of the State Administration Council Chairman, yesterday.

cept for those on maternity leave and for other health cases and if failed, they would face action in accordance with the Civil Ser-

vices Law and rules. The private sectors faced hardships due to COVID-19 lockdown and Stay at Home or-

der. The Union Minister then highlighted the full guarantee of civil servants regarding work, accommodation, foreign training and pensions. She then emphasized the difference between the insurance and opportunities between the private industry staff and government staff. The government is making efforts to improve the State economy, and it can create opportunities for the government employees in the long run. She also appreciated the efforts of employees who come office as usual during this period. She then discussed the most stable and best life guarantee of civil servants out of three kinds of staff— non-governmental or-

ganizations' staff, private industry staff and government staff. She also urged to adopt effective and systematic efforts in serving for the public and following the Civil Services Law and rules despite changing governance. Deputy Director-General for Disaster Management U Win Shwe then briefed the excerpts from the speech of the State Administration Council Chairman made on 8 February. The Union Minister also urged the civil servants to understand the speech of the State Administration Council Chairman and instructed to discuss collectively for other issues with the departmental heads.—MNA

Traditional clay pots for drinking water get high demand in Phaungpyin Township

TRADITIONAL clay pots for drinking water are in high demand in Phaungpyin Township, Sagaing Region, as it is scorching in summer.

The prices of clay pots range between K2,000-K7,000 depending on design, size and quality. Last year, it took about a month to sell all the pots loaded on a motor vessel. Now, the pots on a vessel are expected to be sold out within 15 days on the back of strong demand. A ship carrying clay pots are estimated at K2 million, said the clay pot sellers.

Some vendors and hawkers carrying goods on their shoulders are selling the clay pots in Kalewa, Mawlaik and Phaungpyin townships. In addition to pots for drinking



The prices of clay pots range between K2,000-K7,000 depending on design, size and quality.

water, flower vase (Buddhist offering), and earthen pots for cooking, earthen toys and money-saving box are also in high demand. -- Ko Tun (IPRD)/GNLM

Imports down by \$1.7 bln as of 12 February, MOC reports

THE value of Myanmar's imports between 1 October and 12 February in the current financial year 2020-2021 stood at US\$5.967 billion, a sharp drop of \$1.7 billion from \$7.67 billion registered in the year-ago period, according to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The value of imports in the consumer, capital, intermediate goods, and CMP businesses groups dropped in the current FY.

Over the past four months of the current FY, capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles,

machines, steel, and aeroplane parts, were brought into the country. Their import value was estimated at \$2 billion. The figure was \$829 million lower compared to the same period in the previous FY.

Meanwhile, Myanmar imported consumer products worth \$1.25 billion, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil. The imports of consumer products showed a slight decrease of \$34.9 million compared with the same period in the previous FY.

Intermediate goods make

up a large share of Myanmar's imports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. This year, imports of raw materials plunged to \$1.95 billion from \$2.62 billion registered during the year-ago period.

During the same period, raw materials worth \$728.7 million were also imported for the Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) garment sector, showing a decrease of \$172.75 million compared with last fiscal year.

At present, the CMP garment sector, which contributes

to 30 per cent of Myanmar's export sector, is struggling because of the cancellation of order from the European countries and suspension of the trade by western nations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, import values of raw materials by CMP businesses have been dropping.

The top 10 import countries to Myanmar are China, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Viet Nam, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US, as per data of the Ministry of Commerce. — GNLM

Onion price drops by over \$30 per tonne depending on size

THE onion price has declined by over US\$30 per tonne depending upon the size, according to the Myanmar Onion, Garlic & Culinary Crops Production and Exporting Association (MOGCCPEA).

About 200 trucks loaded with culinary crops are exported daily to Thailand via the Myawady trade zone. The shipped items are corn, onion, garlic, peanuts, peanuts (with peel), rice, yam, dried chilli, turmeric, avocado, mussels, and tamarind.

Out of those exported products, the onion has export licenses issued at the FOB price set to apply for an export licence every two weeks by the MOGCCPEA.

For this week, the association's FOB prices are \$145 per tonne for new crops 2021 20mm-30 mm size, \$170 per tonne for 25mm-35mm size and \$215 per tonne for 35mm-upsize.

Therefore, the onion price plunged by over \$ 30 per tonne this week.

Similarly, the garlic price has also slightly declined with \$1,070 per tonne for 18 mm-28mm size and \$1,250 per tonne for 28mm-upsize.

Besides, there is no rubber export to foreign market so far. The prevailing prices of International Rubber -- Ribbed Smoked Sheets (RSS) and Myanmar Standard Rubber (MSR) remain unchanged, according to the fixed price of Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association (MRPPA).

At present, the various

items to export to the neighbouring country through the Myawady border trade zone are being scrutinized, and Form-D is being issued to get Customs clearance.

Starting from 1 January 2021, Form-D is issued by transmitted e-ATIGA Form-D using the electric data exchange system. However, if there is a technical error or internet error, Manual Form-D is being issued with a manual sign instead of e-ATIGA Form D.—NN/GNLM

Okra growers in Pwintbyu enjoy high price

WITH the abundant yield of okra in Pwintbyu township, the local growers are happy with the high price of okra in the market, according to the local farmers from Nyaung Gone village in Pwintbyu township.

The farmers from the villages near Mann creek in Pwintbyu township, Magway region, are growing okra on a commercial scale using the water irrigated from Mann creek and underground water.

The okra could heavily yield after cultivating for two months. The okra is sold for K6 per piece in the market. Now, the growers are happy with the abundant yield of okra. "We, the villagers in Pwintbyu township, are growing the vegetable crops on a commercial scale using the water irrigated from Mon creek and also the underground water. We are mainly cultivating gourd, pumpkin, cucumber, eggplant, tomato, chilli, onion, corm, bitter gourd, radish, coriander plant, rosselle and water green. We are relying on cultivation because it can earn us daily income in the pandemic period. Among other crops, the cultivation of okra is successful, and the okras are sold for a high price," said U Than Htay Aung, a vegetable grower from Nyaung Gon village.

Okra, or commonly known as lady's finger, is a widely consumed vegetable. It can be fried, pickled or grilled. This green veggie is filled with phenol and flavonoid. Consuming okra can help people in their fight against cancer in addition to the reduction of stress, can cure kidney and liver diseases and diabetes. People with a high blood glucose level should include okra in their daily diets. —Ye Win Naing (IPRD)/GNLM

NEWS
IN BRIEFChina's major
carmaker to boost
cooperation with
Sweden's Volvo

CHINESE carmaker Zhejiang Geely Holding Group said Wednesday that its group company will boost cooperation with Swedish auto manufacturer Volvo, but apparently failed to agree on a previously explored merge.

The Chinese automaker said it will work together with the Swedish manufacturer to develop "connected cars" equipped with advanced telecommunication systems.

Zhejiang Geely completed its acquisition of Volvo in 2010. It has also decided to establish a new firm to produce an electric vehicle with China's leading internet search provider Baidu Inc. China has been eager to phase out new sales of gas-powered cars and bring eco-friendly ones to the mainstream by 2035, while President Xi Jinping has pledged to make the country carbon neutral by 2060. Kyodo News ■

H.K. to book record
budget deficit amid
worst economic
contraction

HONG KONG is likely to see a record high deficit budget amid the biggest annual economic contraction brought by the novel coronavirus pandemic, the territory's finance chief said Wednesday.

Announcing the annual budget at the legislature, Financial Secretary Paul Chan said the deficit for the 2020 fiscal year, which spans from April to March, is expected to be HK\$257.6 billion (US\$33.2 billion), while fiscal reserves are expected to be HK\$902.7 billion.

"Hong Kong will record a deficit for a number of years after achieving a surplus for 15 years," Chan said. "The deficits are mainly caused by the fact that the rise in government expenditure is outpacing the increase in government revenue." He added that government expenditure increased substantially last year, including HK\$120 billion in counter-cyclical relief measures, to alleviate economic hardship caused by the pandemic. Kyodo News ■

Sri Lanka seeks £1.6 billion from China as reserves shrink



An oil refinery facility under construction at Hambantota. Sri Lanka was forced to hand over Hambantota port on a 99-year lease to a Chinese firm in 2017 after Colombo said it was unable to service the \$1.4-billion debt from Beijing used to build it. **PHOTO: AFP**

SRI Lanka is seeking \$2.2 billion (£1.6 billion) from Chinese banks, the government said on Thursday, in echoes of a borrowing binge more than a decade ago that resulted in the country having to give up a strategic port to China.

Money and capital markets minister Nivard Cabraal said the government was hopeful of finalising a \$1.5-billion (£1.1 billion) swap facility with China's central bank. "Within the next two weeks we should be able to finalise it," Cabraal told reporters

in Colombo while maintaining that the funds would be used as a "buffer" to meet the government's foreign currency needs.

Official figures show Sri Lanka's foreign reserves plummeted to \$4.8 billion (£3.4 billion) at the end of January, the lowest since

September 2009 when they fell to \$4.2 billion (£2.9 billion).

Officials said Sri Lanka was also in talks with China Development Bank for a \$700-million (£496 million) loan that would include the equivalent of \$200 million (£142 million) being drawn in Chinese currency. Under former president Mahinda Rajapaksa between 2005-15, Colombo borrowed billions from China, accumulating a mountain of debt for expensive infrastructure projects. This sparked Western and Indian concerns that the strategically located Indian Ocean nation was falling victim to a Chinese debt trap. Mahinda Rajapaksa returned to power as prime minister in 2019 after his brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected president. Sri Lanka was forced to hand over its strategic Hambantota port on a 99-year lease to a Chinese company in 2017 after Colombo said it was unable to service the \$1.4-billion (£1 billion) debt from Beijing used to build it. — AFP ■

Indonesia hunts for missing after mine collapse kills six

RESCUERS hunted for at least one person still missing Thursday after an illegal gold mine collapse in Indonesia killed six people.

A landslide Wednesday evening buried the remote site on Sulawesi island's Parigi Moutong district, where five women and one man died while some 16 survivors were pulled from the debris.

At least one person was still missing, authorities said.

Unlicensed mines are common across the mineral-rich Southeast Asian archipelago and the scene of frequent accidents.

Last year, 11 miners died in Sumatra after a landslide sparked by heavy rains, with another nine people also killed in a landslide at an abandoned gold mine on the island.

In 2019, at least 16 people were buried alive when a mine collapsed in North Sulawesi. — AFP ■



Six people were killed after an illegal gold mine collapsed in Indonesia. Authorities said at least 15 survivors had been found and at least one person is still missing. **PHOTO: AFP**

Driverless bus hits streets of Malaga in southern Spain



The electric-powered vehicle operates autonomously, but a driver still needs to sit behind the wheel as Spanish law doesn't allow self-driven vehicles yet. **PHOTO: AFP**

A new driverless electric bus has begun operating in the southern Spanish city of Malaga, in a project presented as

a first in Europe.

The bus, which began running on Saturday, is equipped with sensors and cameras and

links Malaga's port to the city centre on an eight-kilometre (five-mile) loop it does six times a day.

"The bus knows at all times where it is and what is around it," said Rafael Durban Carmona, who heads the southern division of Spanish transport company Avanza that leads the public-private consortium behind the project.

It can "interact with traffic lights," which are also equipped with sensors that alert the bus when they turn red, he told AFP.

The bus uses artificial intelligence to improve its "decisions" based on data recorded along the route.

The 12-metre (39-foot) ve-

hicle, which looks like any other bus, can carry 60 passengers and was developed by Spanish firm Irizar.

Other driverless pilot projects already exist in Europe, but none of them involves a regular-size urban bus that runs on a normal street with other vehicles.

Despite the advanced technology, there is a driver at the wheel to take control if necessary since Spanish law does not currently allow vehicles to operate without a driver.

"We put it in automatic mode and it runs completely autonomously," explains Cristobal Maldonado, the driver. — AFP ■

U.S. economy's contraction in 2020 unrevised at 3.5%

THE U.S. government on Thursday left the country's economic contraction for 2020 unchanged at 3.5 per cent in its latest data revision, with the figure representing the worst performance since 1946 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In the October-December period, the U.S. economy expanded an annualized real 4.1 per cent, revised upward by 0.1 percentage point from an earlier estimate, according to the Commerce Department.

The revised data for gross domestic product in the fourth quarter of 2020 was roughly in line with the average market forecast of a 4.2 per cent expansion.

Personal spending, which accounts for two-thirds of the world's largest economy, increased 2.4 per cent after jumping 41.0 per cent in the July-September period.

Nonresidential private investment, a measure of business spending, rose 14.0 per cent following a 22.9 per cent growth.

Exports grew 21.8 per cent after soaring 59.6 per cent in the preceding quarter. Imports gained 29.6 percent after a 93.1 per cent surge in the July-September period.

GDP measures the total output of goods and services within a country's borders. Kyodo News ■



The U.S. government on Thursday left the country's economic contraction for 2020 unchanged at 3.5 per cent in its latest data revision, with the figure representing the worst performance since 1946 due to the coronavirus pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP**

Pandemic hits beer sales at brewery

THE world's largest brewer, AB InBev, said Thursday its annual profits were cut by half as bars and pubs closed around the world due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The group, which includes the Budweiser, Stella Artois and Corona brands, saw 2020 net profit slump to \$3.8 billion.

But in the fourth quarter, profits more than doubled to \$2.2 billion from \$962 million in the same period in 2019 and it forecast "strong recovery" in sales and profits for 2021.

"Following a strong start to the year, our overall results in 2020 were significantly impacted by the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic," the

Belgian-Brazilian brewer said in a statement.

Beer consumption plummeted as lockdown measures were imposed throughout the world since early last year to contain the coronavirus.

But "consumers rapidly adjusted to the new reality by shifting to in-home consumption occasions, increasing adoption of the e-commerce channel and finding new ways to connect with others, reinforcing our confidence in the long-term potential of the beer category," the group said.

It said sales volumes declined 4.7 per cent, but revenues by just 3.7 per cent to \$46.9 billion due to higher pricing. —AFP ■

Japan, 7 other economies agree to cut saury catch quotas by 40%

JAPAN, China and six other economies of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission agreed Thursday to cut their saury catch quotas by 40 per cent to 333,750 tonnes per year in order to address fishery resource depletion.

The new catch limit, which was decided during a three-day online meeting through Thursday, will be in place until the end of 2022.

The saury catch limit is currently set at 556,250 tonnes among the eight participating economies, with 330,000 tonnes allocated for high seas and 226,250 tonnes for exclusive economic zones in Japanese and Russian waters. The members have agreed to cut both allocations by 40 per cent to 198,000 tonnes and 135,750 tonnes, respectively.

Tokyo proposed a reduction of the annual catch quotas, first agreed to in 2019, as a way to prevent overfishing in the high seas by China and Taiwan.

According to a national saury fisheries cooperative, Japan's saury haul in 2020 fell 27 per cent from the previous year to a record low 29,566 tonnes.



A saury catch is landed at Hanasaki port in Nemuro in Hokkaido, northern Japan, in November 2020. **PHOTO: KYODO**

The commission's other seven participants -- Canada, China, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, the United States and Vanuatu -- have also been experiencing poor catches in recent years.

According to Japan's fisher-

ies agency, the combined catch of all participants excluding the United States and Canada in 2019 fell nearly 60 per cent from the previous year to 191,000 tonnes, far less than the new agreed limit. — Kyodo News ■

China sees acceleration in work resumption after Spring Festival holiday



Photo taken with a mobile phone shows employees working on the production line at Hefei Changan Automobile Co., Ltd. in Hefei, east China's Anhui Province, Feb. 17, 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

MOVING back and forth on an automobile assembly line, Zhang Tianshun was conducting function tests for vehicles before they roll off the production line.

"My job is to check the functionality of seven parts of the car, including four windows, front and rear wipers and the sunroof. It takes two minutes to test a car for my part, and I need to handle about 200 cars per day. It's even busier than before the holiday," said the young man.

It was the first time for Zhang to spend the Spring Festival, or China's Lunar New Year, away from his hometown of Zhumadian City, central China's Henan Province. The 19-year-old works at Hefei Changan Automobile Co., Ltd. in east China's Anhui Province.

Zhang received a combined subsidy of nearly 3,000 yuan (about 465 U.S. dollars) from Hefei City and the company for not leaving during the holiday.

To prevent the sporadic resurgence of COVID-19, China encouraged people to stay put over the holiday this year, which lasted from Feb. 11 to 17.

EARLIER WORK RESUMPTION

The car plant resumed production on Feb. 14, after a three-day break, when most people were still celebrating the holiday. More than 1,700 employees, or 85 per cent of its staff, clocked in on the first day of work, including over 800 migrant workers who stayed during the holiday. The manufacturing capacity has returned to the pre-holiday level, with 600 to 700 vehicles rolling off the production line per day, according to the company.

"Another production line resumed operation on Feb. 17, whose capacity is around 300 units a day. Cars coming from this assembly line will be exported to Saudi Arabia, Chile and Brazil," said Xue Wen, an engineer with the company. — Xinhua ■

Responsible pet ownership a step towards curbing rabies

Lat Pan or Red-silk cotton trees (*Salmalia malabrica*) and Myanmar's folk culture are inseparable, as the dried flowers of the red-silk cotton trees are cooked with beef, which has been the traditional cuisine of Myanmar since the time of kings.

But, the Red-silk cotton trees blossom in summer wakes the country's people up to the danger of rabies as the disease's occurrence is notorious among the Myanmar community with a traditional saying, "the time of Lat Pan blossoming is a time of rabies". It means that rabies occurrence is high in the summertime when "lat pan" tree blossom.

Rabies is preventable through vaccination and post-exposure immunization. Yet, nearly 70,000 people still die from the disease every year across the world, mostly in rural areas.

In fact, to tackle this disease, a multi-sectoral response is needed. Given that 99 per cent of human infections are acquired from dog bites, mass vaccination of dogs — combined with the management of stray dogs and responsible dog ownership — is the most cost-effective way to eliminate the disease.

According to a 2018 survey, there are over 4 million dogs in Myanmar, and this number is too high for our country. Nonetheless, if we ensure that human vaccines and immunoglobulin are affordable and accessible, we can reduce the fatality rate,

which is almost 100 per cent if post-exposure prophylaxis is not given before symptoms develop.

Vaccinating 70 per cent of dogs can reduce human cases to zero, and the cost of dog vaccines is much lower than that of post-exposure prophylaxis for human beings.

Whenever we read stories about rabies and animal bites in the media, registration of cats and dogs is the first idea that comes into our head.

Registration of cats and dogs is the first step to resolving animal control issues. At the same time, we need to raise awareness about responsible ownership of pets.

To ensure responsible pet ownership and to prevent animals from causing a nuisance to the public, registration of stray animals is not being allowed.

This reflects that ownership of pets comes with responsibilities, and if one cannot fulfil them, then it would be better to forego pets.

Meanwhile, local communities' education is also a key priority to ensure that people who get bitten seek prompt treatment.

To achieve a target of no rabies deaths by 2030, we must recognize that rabies elimination is a health priority.

Long-term Covid should be 'clear priority' for authorities: WHO

"It's a clear priority for WHO, and of the utmost importance. It should be for every health authority," Hans Kluge, regional director for WHO Europe, told a press conference.

A senior World Health Organization official on Thursday urged national authorities to make a priority of understanding the long-term consequences of coronavirus infections as some people show worrying symptoms months later.

"It's a clear priority for WHO, and of the utmost importance. It should be for every health authority," Hans Kluge, regional director for WHO Europe, told a press conference.

While some studies are beginning to shed light on the illness, it is still unclear why some patients with Covid-19 continue to show symptoms

for months, including tiredness, brain fog, and cardiac and neurological disorders.

"The burden is real and it is significant. About one in 10 Covid-19 sufferers remain unwell after 12 weeks, and many for much longer," Kluge said.

Noting that reports of long-term symptoms came soon after the disease was first discovered, he said that some patients were "met with disbelief or lack of understanding."

Kluge stressed that those patients "need to be heard if we are to understand the long-term consequences and recovery from Covid-19."

SOURCE: AFP



Students in Wuhan, China, where COVID-19 was first detected, donned face masks for their graduation ceremonies, joining many around the world for whom masks have become essential. PHOTO: AFP

Covid vaccines block disease, but do they stop infection?

Several such variants -- more contagious, more deadly or both -- have already proliferated in England, South Africa and Brazil as the SARS-CoV-2 virus finds it harder to find new hosts, a predictable phase in the evolution of a pandemic.



An old woman is kissed by a health member after receiving a dose of the Sinovac vaccine against the COVID-19 at Jose Joaquin Vargas, a residence for the elderly with mental disabilities, in Sibate, Colombia. PHOTO: AFP

As reports this week from Scotland and Israel -- where much or most of the population have gotten Covid jabs -- confirm that vaccines largely prevent people from getting sick, another question is emerging: do they also block infection?

A lot depends on the answer, experts say.

If vaccines being rolled out

worldwide ward off not only symptoms but the virus itself, it could sharply slow the pathogen's spread and hasten the return to normalcy.

"If the true impact on infections was very high, it would be great news because that is what we need for herd immunity," Marc Lipsitch, director of the Centre for Communicable Disease Dy-

namics at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, told AFP.

Herd immunity is achieved when most of a population -- estimates vary between 60 to 80 per cent -- have acquired defences against a virus, whether through vaccination or because they caught the bug and survived.

But if the Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines -- and perhaps others made in China, Russia and India -- shield poorly against infection, then even people who have rolled up their sleeves to be injected remain potential, unwitting carriers.

"The big concern is that the vaccines prevent illness, hospitalisation and death, but won't sufficiently prevent transmission," Peter English, a UK-based consultant in communicable disease control and former chair of the British Medical Association's Public Health Medicine Committee, told AFP.

'Escape variants'

In that scenario, communities and economies already reeling from the pandemic face prolonged mask wearing, social distancing and more-or-less hard lockdowns until vaccine campaigns can be completed.

"There is also a greater risk that vaccine 'escape variants' might be thrown up as the virus continues to circulate," English said.

Several such variants -- more contagious, more deadly or both -- have already proliferated in England, South Africa and Brazil as the SARS-CoV-2 virus finds it harder to find new hosts, a predictable phase in the evolution of a pandemic.

But recent studies along with others in the pipeline give reason for optimism.

Research covering the entire Scottish population of 5.4 million -- a fifth inoculated with the Pfizer

or Oxford/AstraZeneca jabs -- provides real-world validation that the vaccines prevent Covid symptoms and illness more than 90 percent of the time.

A study published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine -- comparing two groups in Israel of nearly 600,000 persons each, one vaccinated and the other not -- also reported reduced illness in line with clinical trials.

But unlike the research from Scotland, the Israeli findings also showed infections had sharply declined in the vaccinated cohort -- by 92 percent among those at least one week past the second of two doses.

Encouraging results

The true level of protection may not be that high because Israel does not systematically test for Covid among people with no symptoms, the authors acknowledge.

"They are likely to have failed to detect some asymptomatic cases, and we know that people without symptoms can still transmit the infection," said English.

But the results are still encouraging, he added.

"These findings give us hope that vaccination alone may get the R number below 1," English said, referring to the threshold above which a virus continues to spread.

"If it can -- and this is the big question -- we would eventually no longer need to take behavioural measures such as lockdowns or masks to interrupt spread."

But how is it that despite hundreds of studies, as well as rigorous clinical trials involving tens of thousands of people and resulting in more than half-a-dozen successful vaccines, we still do not know yet how well they block infection?

SOURCE: AFP

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Appointment of Permanent Secretary

The State Administration Council has appointed U Min Min, Director-General of the Union Government Office, as the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce.

Appointment of Head of Civil Services Organization

U Sein Win, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Health) of Union Government Office, Ministry of Health and Sports, is appointed as Director-General for Union Government Office on probation period with effect from the day of his first duty.

Appointment of Mongolian Ambassador to Myanmar agreed on

THE Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr Tumor Amarsanaa as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Bangkok in succession to Mr Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg.

Mr Tumor Amarsanaa was born in September 1981. He holds a Master of law from the Kyushu University of Japan and Bachelor of Law from the National University of Mongolia. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia in 2003. From 2003-2008, he served at the Law and Consular Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia. From 2008 to 2011, he served as Second Secretary at the Embassy and the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the UNODC, IAEA, CTBTO, OSCE, UNCITRAL and other International Organizations based in Vienna. From 2012 to 2014, he served as Deputy Director-General, Law and Treaty Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Mongolia. From 2014 to 2020, he served as Director-General, Department of International law and Treaty and Department of International Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia. Currently, he has been serving as Ambassador of Mongolia to the Kingdom of Thailand and the Permanent Representative to the International Organizations based in Bangkok since 2020.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Nay Pyi Taw

Dated : 26 February 2021



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 25 February, 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and generally fair elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 26 February, 2021: Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region and Shan, Kayin, Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

Moderna South Africa variant-specific vaccine ready for testing

US biotech firm Moderna said Wednesday that doses of its new COVID-19 vaccine candidate aimed at the South African coronavirus variant had been shipped to the US National Institutes of Health for testing.

"We look forward to beginning the clinical study of our variant booster and are grateful for the NIH's continued collaboration to combat this pandemic," said CEO Stephane Bancel.

The South African variant is considered among the more dangerous of current mutations because it evades some of the blocking action of antibodies that target the older coronavirus strain.

That means people who were infected with the classic

strain are more susceptible to reinfection, and research has also shown the variant has partly reduced the protection of the current generation of vaccines.

While initial testing has shown that Moderna's original vaccine - called mRNA-1273 - remains effective against emerging variants, the company said it was pursuing the development of a variant-specific vaccine as part of a number of strategies being considered. Either a South Africa variant-specific candidate, called mRNA-1273.351, could be used as a booster, or the company might use a booster that combines the classic vaccine with the variant-specific mRNA-1273.351 to create a new product. —AFP ■



US biotech firm Moderna said Wednesday that doses of its new COVID-19 vaccine candidate aimed at the South African coronavirus variant had been shipped to the US National Institutes of Health for testing. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mafia eye health, recovery projects in virus-hit Italy

In coronavirus-hit Italy, mafia groups are eyeing the health sector and EU-funded infrastructure projects as their next big money-spinners, police warned in a report Wednesday.

"Significant criminal investments are conceivable in companies operating in the so-called health chain," Italy's anti-mafia investigative police (DIA) wrote in a bi-annual report to parliament.

Potential targets include building and renovating hospitals, the production and supply of medical equipment, hospital waste disposal, and sanitary and funeral services, DIA said.

Police also said it was "very likely" that mafia organisations would "try to intercept the new financing channels" set to be made available to upgrade Italy's infrastructure and modernise its economy. That is a reference to the more than €200 billion Rome expects to receive from the European Union's post-coronavirus Recovery Fund over the 2021-2026 period.

DIA called for the "utmost vigilance" on companies bidding for health sector public tenders, pointing out that recent corporate changes in ownership, structure or office location may be a sign of mafia infiltration.

They also said that talk of streamlining public tender procedures - to minimise the risk of delays in EU-funded projects - "should be accompanied by careful and swift anti-mafia monitoring." —AFP ■

Channel Tunnel operator deep in red as virus hits

GETLINK, the operator of the Channel Tunnel link with Britain, reported Thursday a 2020 net loss of 113 million euros due to the coronavirus pandemic and Brexit but said it was confident in the future.

The company, formerly known as Eurotunnel, reported a 2019 net profit of 159 million euros (\$193 million).

Revenues were down 25 per cent at 816 million euros last year, with Eurostar passenger services badly hit by the pandemic restrictions and the fallout from Brexit. Operating profit - the company's preferred measure - plunged 41 per cent to 328 million euros, an amount described as still "very substantial."

The company said it had not "burned through cash," and had also managed to reduce debt during the crisis.

Boss Yann Leriche said the



The Channel Tunnel has seen a big fall on passengers numbers due to the pandemic and Brexit. **PHOTO: AFP**

company had put in a "solid" performance in exceptional circumstances caused by the pandemic and Brexit. "We have no doubt that the rebound will be rapid as soon as restrictions are lifted and that the situation will improve, notably thanks to vaccination," he added.

The company did not make specific forecasts for 2021, citing a lack of visibility on the outlook.

Leriche noted that the British government's announcement on Monday that it would review travel restrictions on May 17 had sparked an immediate increase in bookings. —AFP ■

Qantas posts huge loss, says no international flights until October



Qantas, Australia's biggest airline says it suffered an underlying loss of Aus\$1.1 billion (US\$858 million) in the six months to December 31. **PHOTO: AFP**

AUSTRALIAN carrier Qantas reported on Thursday a US\$5.5 billion plunge in revenue during the second half of 2020 and said international passenger flights would not resume until October as the pandemic continued to devastate the industry.

The country's biggest airline said it suffered an underlying pre-tax loss of Aus\$1.03 billion (US\$814 million) in the six months to December 31, with statutory losses climbing

to Aus\$1.47 billion.

"These figures are stark, but they won't come as a surprise," said Qantas CEO Alan Joyce.

"A year ago, none of us knew just how big an impact Covid would have on the world, or on aviation. It's clearly worse than anyone expected," he said.

"Border closures meant we lost virtually 100 percent of our international flying and 70 per cent of our domestic flying

-- three-quarters of our revenue -- around Aus\$7 billion -- went with it."

Joyce noted that the company had already seen revenue fall Aus\$4 billion during the first half of 2020, bringing the total impact of the pandemic to Aus\$11 billion. "That is a massive number, probably a bigger number than any other company in Australia is experiencing because of Covid," he told a news conference. —AFP ■

Nuclear issue key as Iran readies for Rouhani replacement

IRAN will vote in June for a successor to President Hassan Rouhani and his moderate-reformist government, but politics in the country is dominated by the nuclear issue and no frontrunner has emerged.

Several conservative heavyweights are thought to be considering running in the key June 18 race, with the winner to help set the direction of the Islamic republic.

“For the moment, the electoral atmosphere remains cold,” political analyst Amir Mohebian told AFP, adding that when politicians “try to warm it up, people are not paying attention”.

Following the election of US President Joe Biden, Washington, European powers and

Tehran are trying to salvage the troubled 2015 nuclear accord, which granted Iran international sanctions relief in return for restrictions on its nuclear programme.

The accord has been nearing collapse since Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew in 2018 and reimposed crippling sanctions as part of a “maximum pressure” campaign against Tehran.

Rouhani, who bet on engagement with the West when Barack Obama was president only to see tensions soar under Trump, has shown a willingness to engage with the incoming Biden administration.

But Rouhani will step down after completing the second of his two consecutive four-year



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani will step down after completing his second consecutive four-year term. **PHOTO: IRANIAN PRESIDENCY/AFP**

terms allowed under the constitution, and, while Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

remains in charge, the new president will direct his own policy course. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

German man charged for spying at parliament for Russians

GERMAN prosecutors said Thursday they have filed spying charges against a man suspected of passing floorplans of parliament to Russian secret services, in a new case that risks further inflaming tensions between Berlin and Moscow.

The suspect, a German national named only as Jens F., worked for a company that was repeatedly contracted by the Bundestag to carry out regular checks on electric equipment across parliament premises.

“Against this background, the defendant had access to PDF files with the floor plans of” parliamentary properties, said federal prosecutors.

The suspect is believed to have decided sometime in the summer of 2017 to pass on the information to Russian secret services. —AFP ■

Australia passes landmark law requiring tech firms to pay for news

AUSTRALIA’S parliament passed landmark legislation on Thursday requiring global digital giants to pay for local news content, in a move closely watched around the world.

The law passed easily after a last-gasp deal that watered down binding rules Facebook and Google had fiercely opposed in return for the tech giants agreeing to pay local media companies. The new law paves the way for Google and Facebook to invest tens of millions of dollars in local content deals, and could prove a model for resolving the firms’ tussles with regulators worldwide. Google will now pay for news content that appears on its ‘Showcase’ product, and Facebook is expected to pay providers who appear on its ‘News’ product, which is to be rolled out in Australia later this year. Regulators had accused the companies, who dominate online advertising, of draining cash away from traditional news organizations while using their content for free. —AFP ■

Libya’s new PM to unveil team in first hurdle of transition



Abdul Hamid Dheibah. **PHOTO: AFP**

LIBYA’S prime minister-designate Abdul Hamid Dheibah is set to name a transitional government Thursday tasked with unifying the war-torn nation and leading it to elections in December.

Dheibah, himself selected earlier this month in a UN-sponsored process, will deliver his line-up to Libya’s presidential council, before it is submitted

to parliament for approval at a venue and date that have yet to be agreed, a member of his office said late Wednesday.

Libya last week marked 10 years since the start of its 2011 NATO-backed uprising that toppled longtime dictator Muammar Ghaddafi, plunging the country into a decade of violence and political turmoil.

Today, the oil-rich North African nation is split between two rival administrations, as well as countless militias.

Emadeddin Badi, an analyst at the Geneva-based Global Initiative, warns that Dheibah faces a rough ride ahead.

While his appointment “temporarily” resulted in support across Libya, he said, those left

out “will undoubtedly mobilize to hinder support for his administration.”

The new team aims to replace a Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), headed by Fayez al-Sarraj, and a parallel cabinet in eastern Libya backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar and parliament.

It faces the daunting challenge of addressing the grievances of ordinary Libyans, hit by a dire economic crisis, soaring unemployment, wretched public services and crippling inflation.

Dheibah, a 61-year-old engineer and businessman who once held posts under Kadhafi, was selected on February 5 by a forum of 75 Libyan delegates at UN-led talks in Switzerland. —AFP ■

Pakistan, India pledge to end skirmishes along Kashmir frontier

PAKISTAN and India on Thursday pledged to end all firing along their disputed Kashmir frontier, according to a joint statement from their militaries, after months of violence between the nuclear-armed rivals.

The two nations regularly exchange artillery and machine-gun fire along the ceasefire line known as the Line of Control (LoC) that has separated the countries for decades.

“Both sides agreed for strict observance of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the Line of Control and all other sectors with effect from midnight,” read the statement.

The announcement follows

months of clashes with each accusing the other of being responsible for thousands of ceasefire violations in the past year alone.

According to the Pakistan military, approximately 1.7 million civilians live along the LoC and increasingly rely on hundreds of bunkers to shelter during frequent skirmishes.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their acrimonious separation in 1947. The region has been a cause of two of their three wars since then.

The nations agreed in 2003 to a ceasefire along the LoC, which has prevented another full-blown war from erupting but



A Pakistani soldier stands guard at the Line of Control at Abdullah Pur village in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. **PHOTO: AFP**

has largely failed to quell the skirmishes.

Both countries claim large portions of the Himalayan region, where India is also fighting

an insurgency that has left tens of thousands dead since 1989.

New Delhi regularly accuses Pakistan of supporting the insurgents. —AFP ■

Heathrow airport dives into £2.0 bn annual loss

LONDON'S Heathrow airport dived into a pre-tax loss of £2.0 billion (€2.3 bn) last year, a result that "underlines the devastating impact of COVID-19 on aviation", it said on Wednesday.

The loss reflected a 73 per cent plunge in passenger numbers, Heathrow said in a statement.

The airport, one of the world's busiest hubs, recorded a pre-tax profit of £546 million in 2019.

Heathrow chief executive John Holland-Kaye, who said passenger levels shrunk in 2020 to levels last seen in the 1970s, voiced optimism for the year ahead with Britain vaccinating millions of adults and preparing to exit its virus lockdown.

"We can be hopeful for 2021, with Britain on the cusp of becoming the first country in the world to safely resume international travel and

trade at scale," he said in the earnings statement. "Getting aviation moving again will save thousands of jobs and reinvigorate the economy."

Heathrow last year had 22 million passengers compared with 81 million in 2019. More than half of the 22 million travelled in the first two months of last year, before the pandemic took hold and governments worldwide implemented national lockdowns.

Heathrow's revenue meanwhile tumbled 62 per cent to £1.2 billion in 2020, while cargo volumes slid 28 per cent. Heathrow said it has £3.9 billion of liquidity, enough to see it through until 2023.

The airport's last financial year was notable also owing to Britain's Supreme Court ruling that it could build a third runway. —AFP ■



Passengers at Heathrow airport. PHOTO: AFP

Yellen urges G20 to 'go big' with pandemic stimulus



Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen says advanced countries must act together to spend 'big' on economic recovery from the pandemic and help poor countries obtain vaccines. PHOTO: AFP

THE world's most advanced nations must work in unison both to continue spending to boost the pandemic recovery, and help poor nations acquire Covid-19 vaccines, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Thursday.

"No one nation alone can declare victory over these crises," Yellen said in a letter to G20 finance officials meeting virtually. "This is a moment made for action and for multilateralism."

In the battle to help

the global economy recover from the crisis, "our first task must be stopping the virus" with worldwide immunization, she said.

But she warned against making the mistake of pulling back too soon on the stimulus which governments have been providing to shore up their economies, saying now is the time to "go big".

Developing nations have raised the alarm -- echoed by the International Monetary Fund and others -- that the richest nations are hogging the world's supply of vaccines, leaving their poor brethren behind.

Yellen warned that this would lead to further loss of life and delay the economic recovery, and urged the G20 "to increase their support to meet the high, unmet needs" of global vaccine initiatives like COVAX.

"A rapid and truly global vaccination program is the strongest stimulus we can provide to the global economy," she said.

At the same time she stressed that G20 governments must continue to provide substantial support for their own economies to recover from the pandemic crisis, following the lead of the United States.

The US Congress is moving towards approving President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion rescue package to help boost the economy. —AFP ■

Vodafone prepares to float '€15 billion' tower business

BRITISH mobile phone giant Vodafone on Wednesday said it planned to partially float its European telecoms towers business, Vantage Towers, on the Frankfurt stock market before the end of March.

Headquartered in Germany and estimated to be worth €15 billion, Vantage "is focused on deploying the full potential of its market-leading tower infrastructure to serve the increasing demand for connectivity



A Vodafone booth at a trade fair in Germany. PHOTO: AFP

across Europe, driven by data growth, 5G roll-out and regulatory coverage obligations", Vodafone said in a statement.

The initial public of-

fering (IPO) on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange "is expected to be before the end of March 2021", Vodafone added.

Analysts believe that up to €4 billion could be raised from floating a minority stake, helping to cut Vodafone's debt.

Vantage Towers chief executive Vivek Badrinath said the IPO "sets the foundations for the next stage of our growth within the dynamic towers industry". —AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO LUNG VOY. NO. (111N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V KUO LUNG VOY. NO. (111N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **26-2-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMIT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINE

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER CHANT VOY. NO. (0230-027N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V EVER CHANT VOY. NO. (0230-027N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **26-2-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **HPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S'PORE) PTE., LTD.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1041W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1041W/E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **26-2-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS (S'PORE) PTE LTD

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

As the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 2nd MARCH 2021 (Peasant's Day), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

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Reg. No. 4/215/2014 (10.1.2014)



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Daw Htoo Htoo, H.G.P
For **König Ludwig International GmbH & Co. KG,**
C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road & Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
hh@kcyangon.com
Dated **26th February 2021**

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Daw Yee Mon Aung, (Advocate)
For **THE POLO/LAUREN COMPANY, L.P.**
c/o **Baker & McKenzie Limited**
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221 Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada Township,
Yangon, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated: **26 February 2021**

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audio speakers; computers; handheld electronic devices; multifunctional electronic devices for receiving, storing and/or transmitting of data and messages; mobile telephones; cameras; video cameras; downloadable music files; audio and video recordings featuring music and artistic performances; USB flash drives; stylus pens for use with touch screens; tripods for binoculars, telescopes and telescopic sights; tripod adapters for binoculars and telescopic sights; tripod plates for binoculars and telescopic sights; mirrors (optics); prisms (optics); binoculars; opera-glasses; telescopes; telescopic sights; magnifying glasses; lensometers; optical apparatus of all kinds; collimators; rifle scopes; oculars; wearable electronic devices; global positioning system (GPS) devices; smartwatches; watchbands that communicate data to other electronic devices; smart glasses; smartbands; smart rings; smart clothes; connected bracelets (measuring instruments); calorie meters; electronic heart rate recorders (other than for medical use); pedometers; altimeters; USB-compatible data storage devices; battery chargers; portable battery packs; accessories, parts, components, and bags, cases and covers for all of the foregoing goods; cases especially made for photographic apparatus and instruments; crystal magnets; protective helmets for sports; warning triangles for vehicles, reflectors for road safety, in particular reflecting signalling boards and road signs, reflective bands and reflective clothing for pedestrian safety." in **Class 9**; " Precious metals and their alloys; jewellery, precious and semi-precious stones; horological and chronometric instruments; tiaras; hair ornaments of precious metal (jewellery); gemstones; synthetic precious stones; imitation precious stones; jewellery stones of faceted glass; ornaments (jewellery); magnets being jewellery; necklaces; earrings; bracelets; rings (jewellery); brooches; bangles; jewellery charms; charms for key rings; pendants; chains of precious and semi-precious metals; chain belts being jewellery; lockets; cuff links; tie pins and tie clips; shoe clips being jewellery; scarf clips being jewellery; medallions; key chains; key rings; items of jewellery of glass, natural or artificial precious stones, plastic, common or precious metal for personal use; beads for making jewellery; watches and clocks and their parts; watch bands and straps; cases adapted for holding watches and clocks; jewellery cases; jewellery boxes." in **Class 14**; " Paper and cardboard; printed matter; bookbinding material; photographs; adhesives for stationery or household purposes; instructional and teaching materials; plastic sheets, films and bags for wrapping and packaging; printers' type, printing blocks; packing paper; paper ribbons; bags, envelopes and pouches of paper for packaging; boxes of cardboard or paper; brochures; catalogues; manuals; books; coffee table books; greeting cards; packaging pouches, packaging wrappers and packaging bags of plastic; labels (not of textile); notebooks; scrapbooks; journals; calendars; bookends; bookmarks; paperweights; passport holders; passport covers." in **Class 16**; " Household or kitchen utensils and containers; cookware and tableware, except forks, knives and spoons; combs and sponges; brushes, except paintbrushes; brush-making materials; articles for cleaning purposes; unworked or semi-worked glass, except building glass; glassware, porcelain and earthenware; decorative objects made of crystal, earthenware, ceramic, glass, porcelain; figurines; barware; vases; flower pots; candelabras; candlesticks; candle holders; candle rings; crockery; dishes; heat-insulated flasks and containers; knife rests; table utensils of glass; mugs; cups; bottles; carafes; decanters; glasses; goblets; soap holders; serving utensils; jars; bowls; serving platters; teapots; coffee pots; cake stands; pots; saucers; hair brushes, makeup brushes and nail brushes; salt and pepper shakers decorated with glass; perfume vaporizers sold empty; chopsticks; clothes-pegs; coasters, not of paper and other than table linen; bottle stoppers made of glass; bottle openers; portable wine coolers; cocktail stirrers; corkscrews; ice buckets; napkin holders; napkin rings; piggy banks; towel rails and rings; trays for domestic purposes; cleaning cloths." in **Class 21**; " Games, toys and playthings; video game apparatus; gymnastic and sporting articles; decorations for Christmas trees; holiday ornaments; ornaments for Christmas trees; board games; bags especially designed for sporting goods; Christmas trees of synthetic material; billiard cues; cups for dice; darts; golf bags, with or without wheels; golf gloves; ice skates; roller skates; kites; theatrical masks; paper party hats; skis; snow globes; snowboards; snowshoes." in **Class 28**; and " Advertising; business management; business administration; office functions; retail or wholesale services; retail or wholesale services via the Internet; the bringing together, for the benefit of others, of a variety of goods, excluding the transport thereof, enabling customers to conveniently view and purchase those goods; the bringing together, for the benefit of others, of a variety of goods, excluding the transport thereof, enabling customers to examine such products on a Web site and purchase those goods conveniently; all the aforementioned services in the fields of precious stones and imitations of precious stones, jewelry and jewelry accessories, watches and clocks and their parts, stationery, pens and writing instruments, eyewear, fashion accessories, clothing, footwear, headwear, handbags, bags and small leather goods, electronic devices and accessories, perfumes, cosmetics, toiletry preparations, chandeliers, lamps and lighting fixtures, home goods, accessories and decor, figurines and crystal goods, holiday ornaments, binoculars, telescopes and telescopic sights; commercial promotion, information and advertising services, also provided via the internet; organization of exhibitions, fairs and fashion shows for commercial or advertising purposes; sales promotion for others; dissemination of advertisements (leaflets, prospectuses, printed matter, samples); publication of printed matter (including in electronic form) for advertising purposes; sponsorship (promotion and marketing services); business advice and consultancy relating to franchising; customer loyalty and rewards services, namely, conducting an incentive rewards program to promote the sale of a company's goods and services and to provide customers with specified benefits, namely, promotions, invites to special events, early notification of product releases and discounts on products and tickets to events." in **Class 35**.

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Large real world study confirms Pfizer Covid vaccine 94% effective

THE Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine has proven 94 per cent effective in a study involving 1.2 million people in Israel, the first peer-reviewed real world research confirming the power of mass immunization campaigns to bring the pandemic to a close.

The paper, which was published in the New England Journal of Medicine on Wednesday, also demonstrated there is likely a strong protective benefit against infection, a crucial element in breaking onward transmission.

"The fact that the vaccines worked so well in the real world... really does suggest that if the nations of the world can find the will, we now have the means to end Covid-19 forever," said Ben Neuman, a virologist from

Texas A&M University who was not involved in the research.

The experiment was carried out between December 20, 2020 and February 1, 2021 -- a period when a newer variant first identified in Britain was rampant in Israel, making the vaccine's performance all the more impressive. Around 1.2 million people were divided into equal groups of vaccinated and unvaccinated. Each vaccinated participant was matched to an unvaccinated "control" person of similar age, sex, geographic, medical and other characteristics.

Lead author Noam Barda, head of epidemiology and research at the Clalit Research Institute, told AFP the matching process was highly robust. —AFP ■



The Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine has proven 94 per cent effective in a study involving 1.2 million people in Israel, the first peer-reviewed real world research confirming the power of mass immunization campaigns to bring the pandemic to a close. **PHOTO: AFP**

Jordan reimposes Friday curfew as virus surges



Jordan has reimposed an all-day curfew on Fridays to stem the spread of coronavirus as cases rise. **PHOTO: AFP**

JORDAN has reimposed an all-day curfew on Fridays to stem the spread of coronavirus as cases rise, officials said Wednesday.

"Starting this week, the government is imposing a curfew throughout the kingdom from 10 pm (2000 GMT) Thursdays until

6 am Saturdays," Information Minister Ali al-Ayed said in a statement. Walking to a mosque for Friday prayers, however, is permitted, he said. An existing nightly curfew will begin at 10 pm instead of midnight, while from Sunday a maximum of 30 per cent of public-sector employees will be allowed at their workplace. The toughening of Covid-19 restrictions returns Jordan to rules imposed in March last year, and which were only eased last month. "The kingdom has witnessed a rapid spread of Covid in recent weeks. This is why swift and strict measures are needed," Health Minister Nazir Obeidat said. —AFP ■

Bulgaria scraps vaccine priority lists after low take-up

BULGARIANS of all ages, some as young as 20, joined long queues at hospitals this weekend after low uptake on priority lists led the government to open up vaccinations to everyone.

Fewer than a third of those designated as first in line for Covid-19 jabs have chosen to take up the offer since they became available in late December.

Many of those queueing this weekend were eager to be among the first non-priority Europeans to get vaccinated, after Bulgaria announced Friday that some hospitals would start administering AstraZeneca shots to anyone.

The decision to scrap its original prioritization lists came after Bulgaria recorded the lowest vaccination rate in the European Union -- largely due to worries

over side effects and growing distrust of the government and its institutions.

Other people however were happy to take the place of the sceptics.

"To be frank, I did not expect that we'd be allowed to go so

quickly," said Denitsa Valkanova, a healthy 31-year-old who got vaccinated together with her mother.

"Friends who live abroad now tell me they will have to wait for another seven or eight months before anything like this could happen," she added. —AFP ■



Suspicion of the authorities is one reason vaccine take-up has been so low in Bulgaria. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK drug dealers adapt to lockdown

ILLICIT drug users in Britain have reported few problems maintaining their supply since the first coronavirus lockdown, with around one in 10 purchasing from the dark web, according to a study published Thursday.

USERS reported some difficulties in finding a supplier and a desired drug during the first national lockdown last year, and faced higher prices, according to the online survey of 2,621 respondents carried out by drugs charity Release.

BUT the majority of respondents now "did not report finding a supplier to be more difficult compared to before the arrival of COVID-19", said lead author Judith Aldridge, with more now seeking deals online.

"AT the start of lockdown, many presumed that the drugs market would be severely affected by border closures... and by 'stay at home' restrictions.

"WE did... observe increased difficulties in purchasing drugs as the first lockdown eased and was lifted, this also coincided with reports of increased prices."

ONE in 10 purchases reported in the survey were made on dark web markets. Thirteen percent of those using such websites reported that it was the first time they had done so. —AFP ■

Bangladesh vaccinates sex workers at largest brothel

BANGLADESH has begun administering coronavirus vaccines to sex workers from the country's largest brothel, a vast warren of shacks home to around 1,900 prostitutes.

THE South Asian nation has so far vaccinated nearly three million people aged 40 or above with the AstraZeneca jab, but has scrapped the age restriction for sex workers at the town of Daulatdia in the country's west.

"AT least 100 sex workers have already got the anti-Covid-19 jabs," Asif Mahmud, health chief in Daulatdia, told AFP.

"IT is very necessary to vaccinate the sex workers... Thousands of people visit the brothel every day and the sex workers at the massive brothel are most vulnerable to the virus."

THE country has focused on inoculating the elderly, front-line health workers and security forces since its vaccination drive launched early this month, but plans to eventually cover about 80 per cent of the population.

THE first sex workers from the brothel to receive the jab travelled to a clinic five kilometres (three miles) away, but Mahmud said authorities were also planning a dedicated vaccine centre inside the brothel. —AFP ■

EU leaders’ summit confronts vaccine rollout woes

EU LEADERS meet Thursday under pressure to speed up Europe’s coronavirus vaccine rollout, and divided over border closures and what introducing vaccine travel certificates could mean.

The video summit for the leaders of the 27-nation bloc comes a year into the Covid-19 crisis, as most of the EU is experiencing a second wave of cases -- or a third wave for some -- that stubbornly won’t diminish.

And the member states now face outbreaks of more contagious variants from Britain and South Africa.

Brussels has warned six governments, including Germany’s, about unilateral border restrictions, while tourist-dependent countries are piling on the pressure to lift travel barriers in time for summer vacations.

After a sluggish start to the EU vaccination rollout -- largely because the EU’s plan was dependent on the vaccine



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said vaccine manufacturers were the EU’s partners in fighting the pandemic. PHOTO: AFP

from drugs giant AstraZeneca, which under-delivered -- European capitals hope supplies will surge from April as Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna ramp up production.

A one-shot vaccine by Johnson & Johnson could also be approved by mid-March.

European Commission chief

Ursula von der Leyen told the German regional daily Augsbürger Allgemeine that, despite the friction with AstraZeneca, “vaccine manufacturers are our partners in this pandemic”.

Her goal is to have 70 per cent of adults in the European Union vaccinated by mid-September. —AFP ■

Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Highly Effective Against Severe Covid



A health care worker looks away as she’s immunized with Johnson & Johnson’s COVID-19 vaccine at Klerksdorp Hospital in Klerksdorp, South Africa, on Feb. 18. PHOTO: AFP

THE single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine is highly effective in preventing severe Covid-19, including newer variants, according to documents released by the US Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday.

The news came as the regulator was set to convene an independent panel Friday that will likely vote to authorize the vaccine, making it the third available in the country hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic.

In large clinical trials, the

J&J vaccine’s efficacy against severe disease was 85.9 per cent in the United States, 81.7 per cent in South Africa, and 87.6 per cent in Brazil. Overall, among 39,321 participants across all regions, the efficacy against severe Covid-19 was 85.4 per cent, but it fell to 66.1 per cent when including moderate forms of the disease.

Crucially, analyses of different demographic groups revealed no marked differences across age, race, or people with underlying conditions.

The vaccine was generally well-tolerated, with no reports of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis), which have been seen in rare cases for the Pfizer and Moderna shots.

Mild to moderate reactions, like injection-site pain, headache, fatigue and muscle pains were more likely to occur in younger participants than older.

There were no reported deaths in the vaccine group, but five in the placebo group.

“The analysis supported a favourable safety profile with no specific safety concerns identified that would preclude issuance of an EUA (emergency use authorization),” the FDA wrote. **One dose, fridge storage**

A third vaccine is seen as a vital means to ramp up the immunization rate in the United States, where more than 500,000 people have lost their lives to the coronavirus.

Some 65 million people in America have so far received at least one shot of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines -- but unlike those, the J&J vaccine requires just one dose, and is stored at fridge temperatures. —AFP ■

New Zealand Coronavirus cluster grows as three new cases registered

NEW ZEALAND reported three new locally transmitted cases of coronavirus on Tuesday, as the cluster in its biggest city of Auckland expanded just days after authorities were forced to impose fresh curbs. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern lifted a brief COVID-19 lockdown in Auckland last week, saying the measures had helped limit the spread of the infection to a family of three.

However, a student from Papatoetoe High School in Auckland was reported to have tested positive for COVID-19 earlier in the day. Health au-

thorities later said that two siblings of the student were also infected with the virus, and have asked everyone linked to the school to get re-tested. Officials have also called on people who had visited specific locations to self isolate and call local health officials for advice on testing.

Auckland’s nearly 2 million residents were plunged into a snap three-day lockdown earlier this month, after a family of three -- two adults and a child -- were diagnosed with the more transmissible UK variant of coronavirus. —AFP ■



New Zealand reported three new locally transmitted cases of coronavirus on Tuesday, as the cluster in its biggest city of Auckland expanded just days after authorities were forced to impose fresh curbs. PHOTO: AFP

China denies using Covid-19 anal swabs on US diplomats

CHINA on Thursday said it had never asked US diplomats to undergo Covid-19 anal swabs, following American media reports that State Department personnel had complained of being subjected to the intrusive test.

China -- which has largely brought the virus under control domestically -- said last month that anal swabs can be more effective than normal throat and nose swabs as the virus can linger longer in the digestive system.

But Beijing rebuffed reports from Vice and Washington Post -- citing US officials

-- that State Department employees in China had been given the test “in error”, despite diplomats being exempt from the procedure.

“China has never requested US diplomatic personnel in China to undergo anal swabs,” foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said at a regular press briefing Thursday.

Officials in China have used anal swabs to test people it considers at high-risk of contracting Covid-19, including residents of neighbourhoods with confirmed cases as well as some international travellers. —AFP ■

HUFC centre-back player retires from football

HANTHARWADY United defender Nyi Nyi Aung retired from football, according to a previous announcement of the football club.

As a greeting, his teammates made a special wish for the player, saying that "May you be peaceful, happy and have a

safe life in the future Nyi Nyi Aung".

Before arriving at the Hantharwady United Football Club, the 31-year-old defender played for the Ministry of Mines Football Club.

Hantharwady United won the championship trophy of the Myanmar National

League in 2010, the 5th place in 2011, the fourth in 2018, the fifth in 2019, and bagged second place in 2020, respectively and the defender assisted the team with the best of his effort.

Nyi Nyi Aung played for Hantharwady United for a decade and also showed

superb skills in 12 matches in the International Club Invitational Tournament and 147 matches in the Myanmar National League.

He scored one goal in an international tourney and scored another single goal in the domestic league. —GNLM ■

Fans, but no cheering, for delayed Olympic torch relay

TOKYO — Spectators will be allowed to line the route when the Olympic flame begins its delayed relay across Japan next month, organizers said Thursday, but cheering will be strictly banned.

The torch relay was scrapped just days before it was due to kick off last year when Japanese and Olympic officials took the unprecedented decision to postpone Tokyo 2020 over the coronavirus pandemic.

Despite persistent concerns about the safety of holding the Games this summer,

organisers say the massive event can go ahead and the torch relay will kick off as planned on March 25.

"The infection situation will vary from area to area, so we need to take that into account and it will be very important to have a meticulous approach," Tokyo 2020 president Seiko Hashimoto told reporters.

"We want to get the understanding of people in every area and connect the whole country under the torch relay concept 'Hope Lights Our Way'." —AFP ■



You can watch but don't cheer: Organizers of the Olympic flame relay in Japan have released rules for how the event can go ahead, which includes limits on what spectators can do. **PHOTO: AFP**

Mourinho compares 'diamond' Spurs teen Scarlett to Rashford

LONDON — Jose Mourinho has compared "diamond" wonderkid Dane Scarlett to Marcus Rashford after the 16-year-old impressed in Tottenham's 4-0 Europa League win against Wolfsburg.

The Spurs boss took the opportunity to blood some youngsters during Wednesday's second leg as they cruised into the last 16 of the competition 8-1 on aggregate.

It was a rare chance for Mourinho to highlight the positives after the worst run of his stellar managerial career.

A dismal run of six defeats in their previous eight games in all competitions had left Tottenham in ninth place in the Premier League and out of the FA Cup.

Winning the Europa League is probably their best chance of qualifying for the Champions League next season.

Scarlett is the first 16-year-old to assist a Europa League goal since Kylian Mbappe in



Tottenham's 16-year-old forward Dane Scarlett has caught the eye of manager Jose Mourinho. **PHOTO: AFP**

2015, for Monaco against Tottenham.

His performance reinforced Mourinho's belief that he is ready to be elevated to the first-team squad for next season.

"He is a diamond, a kid with incredible potential," said the Spurs boss.

"He will be 17 next month and I want him to be part of the first-team squad next season. —AFP ■

Mendy's late strike puts Real Madrid in sight of Champions League quarters

MADRID — Ferland Mendy put Real Madrid within touching distance of the Champions League quarter-finals on Wednesday with the late strike that sank 10-man Atalanta 1-0 in Bergamo.

The French left-back's curling effort came four minutes from time in a last 16, first leg clash in which the hosts had to play a man down for over 70 minutes, giving Zinedine Zidane's side the advantage heading into the second leg in Madrid on March 16.

"We didn't have a great game tonight, but the most important thing was the result, scoring away was important for us," said Zidane.

"It's a very good result against an Atalanta team even at ten, because they defended very well.

"The tie is open. We are going to have a great return match."

Atalanta had attacked early but the game was transformed when Swiss midfielder Remo Freuler was harshly sent off in the 17th minutes for tripping Mendy at the edge of the penalty area.

Gian Piero Gasperini's woes continued with forward Duvan Zapata limping off after half an hour with a muscular problem with midfielder Mario Pasalic coming off the bench. —AFP ■



Real Madrid's French defender Ferland Mendy (L) scored the only goal against Atalanta in Bergamo. **PHOTO: AFP**